

SOUL SATISFACTION**NO. 3137****A SERMON****PUBLISHED ON THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 1909****DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON****AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON***“Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”**Psalm 35:3*

[Another sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is sermon #384, Full Assurance]

THIS text may very properly be understood as a request that God would teach the soul to rest upon Him *in temporal difficulties, and straits, and distresses*. We are all apt to try to work out our own deliverance. We would go back to Egypt, or we would climb the rock on our right hand, or we would, if it were possible, force a passage on the left, but when the Red Sea rolls before, when Pharaoh is behind, and there are frowning rocks on the right hand and on the left, this most delightful truth is learned—and probably it is the only occasion when we can learn it—God is our salvation!

If you are in trouble, Christian, ask who brought you there, for He shall bring you out again. If you are sorely vexed and deeply grieved, why should you look to a human arm for succor, or why should you turn your eyes to the horses and to the chariots of Pharaoh?

Lift up your eyes to the hills, whence comes your help, and in the solemn silence of your soul hear you the soft and cheering word, “I am thy salvation; I have been with thee in six troubles, and no evil has touched thee; now I have brought thee into another trouble, but I will deliver thee out of them all; call upon ME in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee.”

O believer, the strongest sinew in an arm of flesh will crack and the strongest band of human strength will give way. But trust you in the Lord forever, for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength. Learn you to stand still and to see the salvation of God, as He says to you, “I the Omnipotent, I the Omnipresent, I who have servants everywhere, will work your rescue, for I am thy salvation.”

It is also very necessary for us to learn this verse in its teaching *as to soul-matters*, for no man is saved, or can be saved, unless he knows that God is his salvation. The greatest enemy to human souls—I think I am not wrong in saying this—is the self-righteous spirit which makes men look to themselves for salvation.

*“From the cross uplifted high,
Where the Savior deigns to die,”*

there comes a voice, as soft as it is potent, “I am thy salvation.” But the sinner stops his ear and listens—perhaps, to the enchantments of Rome, or to the mutterings of some false priest, or to the equal lying of his own heart, while these say, “*We* are your salvation.” We must get away, brethren, from every form of confidence which would take us from the finished work of Jesus Christ.

From the beginning to the end of the entire matter, the great “I AM” comprehends our whole salvation. Jesus, the “Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,” was, nevertheless, JEHOVAH, the “I AM,” and as the “I AM,” He speaks tonight to every soul that desires to know the way of salvation and He says, “I am thy salvation.”

Sinner, there is no hope for you anywhere else. “Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid.” Your hopes, poor sinner, shall be baseless—they shall be as the fabric of a dream. Rest you not in them, but forsake them, pitying your own folly for having ever trusted in them. Jesus bids you renounce them now. Flee you away from everything which has hitherto yielded you a gleam of comfort, or a ray of joy,

to the wounds of Him who suffered in the sinner's place, and to the cross of Him who was made a curse for us that we might be made a blessing. "I am thy salvation."

You are to trust *now*. Are you saying, "How can I be saved?" Jesus answers, "I *am* thy salvation." Not "I *will be*," but "I *am*." *Present* salvation is stored up in Christ.

***"There is life for a look at the Crucified One;
There is life at this moment for thee."***

"But" say you, "what am I to do? What am I to feel? What am I to be?" The answer is—

***"Nothing, either great or small,
Nothing, sinner, no;
Jesus did it, did it all,
Long, long ago."***

"Yes, but surely there is something wanted to fit me for Him?" No, come just as you are. He does not say, "I will be your salvation when you have done this and that, so as to fit yourself for Me." No, but He says, "I *am* thy salvation." If you do but trust Him unfeignedly and with your whole heart—He this moment forgives you, He this moment takes you into the family of grace, regenerates you, and makes you "a new creature" in Himself. May God grant that we may all spiritually learn this doctrine, "I am thy salvation."

Not that I intend just now to use the text in this sense alone, though I think it is highly proper both in temporal and in spiritual dilemmas to feel that God is our salvation. Rather let me show you how it embodies a prayer of the psalmist for the full assurance of faith. He is asking that, having believed in God, he may have a token for good, that he may be able to—

***"Read his title clear
To mansions in the skies."***

He wants to hear a still, small voice within him saying, "I am thy salvation."

I shall try, first of all, *to describe the assurance intended in the text*. Secondly, *to show its blessedness*. And thirdly, *to set forth the way of reaching it*."

I. First, let me DESCRIBE THE ASSURANCE INTENDED IN THE TEXT.

"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." The assurance which the psalmist seeks in this prayer is *one concerning a very solemn business*. People like to be sure about purchasing their estates. There is a deal of searching every time the land is bought, in order to see that the title is good, valid, and indefeasible. Some persons are very particular about their bodily health and they occasionally like to have an assurance from the physician that every organ is in a sound condition.

But in this Psalm, David is perplexed, neither about his estate, though that was a kingdom, nor about his health, though that was more than a fortune to him, but he is concerned only about his soul. O my brethren, if we ought to be sure anywhere, it is here. Would that we were half as diligent to make our "calling and election sure" as some are to make secure their bonds, and mortgages, and title-deeds.

Not to be sure of heaven? What a wretched state to be in! To have a question about my soul's eternal welfare—a dying mortal, whose breath may depart any second in the hour!—oh, this is misery indeed! I had better know my true state. If it be bad, it will be well for me to know the worst of it while there is time, so that it may yet be mended. And if it be good, it will be a sweet thing for me to know that it is certainly so, and then my "peace shall be like a river," and my joy shall flow on in perpetual waves of freshness.

O my dear hearers, make sure work for eternity! If you must trifle anywhere, never trifle here! This anchor, this bower-anchor, this sheet-anchor of the soul—see that you have a good cable to this. There!

Let everything else go, but now that the dread storm is coming on, see that the anchor holds within the veil—and see also that it is God’s anchor of faith, wrought in you by God the Holy Spirit. Breathe, I pray you, at the very outset of this address, the prayer, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”

And you will notice, as it is about a very solemn business, so, also, *it is an appeal to One who knows about it and who can speak on it with authority*. Brethren, if you should come to a minister, whoever he may be, and say to him, “Sir, I will tell you my evidence. I will relate my experience—tell me, are these the marks of a child of God?” You may deceive him in your statements and he himself may mislead you in his judgment.

What would be the worth of the opinions of all the men in the world as to the state of a soul before God? Certainly it would be very suspicious and would give much cause for fear if God’s people were afraid of me, for I should begin to be afraid of myself. But still, though they have accepted me, let me not therefore take it for granted that God has done so.

I may stand well with His church, I may be beloved by His servants, but for all that He may know that I am none of His. I may be rather more thickly coated with guilt than some others and yet I may not be real gold. I may be better made and varnished than some, and yet I may be but an imitation and not the true wood.

It looks well, my dear hearers, when you dare to come before God and have an investigation of your case. When a man is willing to have the title-deeds of his estate examined in any court in the world, I should think that those deeds were thoroughly sound. When you can say, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts,” or can even pray, as this text does, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation,” then there is hope for you.

But observe that *the evidence the psalmist wants is personal assurance*, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” How many times have we to cry out against that bad habit of generalizing in religion! Beloved, let us repeat what we have said a thousand times before, that national religion is altogether a dream. That even the idea of family religion, excellent as it is, is yet often but a mere idea. The only godliness worth having is personal godliness and the only religion which will really effect salvation is that which is vital and personal to the individual. “Ye must be born again.”

Now there is no way of being born again by proxy. The Church of England may invent its “sponsors” at will, but God has nothing to do with such things. I pray you, never let the soul-damning falsehood of another man standing for you be tolerated in your soul for a single second! Another man cannot promise anything *for you*, or, if he should promise it, he would not be able to accomplish what he had promised. These works must be wrought in you personally by God the Holy Ghost Himself or else you can never be saved.

I love you to pray for your children. I am glad, poor woman, that you are anxious for your husband. It is a good thing that you, husband, should pray for your wife, but oh, remember, the salvation of another will be but poor comfort to you if you yourself should be cast into the everlasting burnings! Let your prayer be first for yourselves. Let that be the leading point and then you will breathe the prayer more hopefully for others.

“Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation. I hear that showers of mercy are dropping all around, let them drop also upon me. I hear that conversions are numerous, oh, if I am not converted, convert me. I know that You do great wonders, Lord—let me be a monument of Your power to save.” It is personal assurance that the psalmist wants.

Observe, also, for it lies on the surface of the text, that *it is an assurance sent, not to the ear, but to the heart*. “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” Now God does speak to us through our ears. When the Word is read or preached, we often get a blessing through hearing it. But if the words you hear merely come to the ear, it involves responsibility without insuring a blessing.

Certain persons *dream* that God is their salvation! Go to bed and dream again, and dream fifty times, and when you have dreamed the same thing fifty times, there can and will be nothing but dreaming in it, after all. You who build on dreams had better mind what you are at.

“Well,” says another, “but I heard a voice in the air.” Nonsense! “But I did,” say you. Superstition! “But I am sure I did.” Well, what does it matter? I care not where the voice came from, if you heard it only with your outward ears. It is as likely to have been the devil that spoke as anybody else, if indeed it was anybody at all. You are as likely to deceive yourself as anything in the world.

The prayer of the text, is not, “Say to *my ears*,” but “Say unto *my soul*, I am thy salvation.” Do you understand what soul-talking is? Oh, dear, dear—the most of people do not understand anything that has to do with the spirit world—there are materialists in Christianity as well as in other matters. They suppose that to worship God means to sing in a certain way, to bend the knee, and to say certain words. Why, you may do all that and yet there may not be a fraction of worship in it.

And on the other hand, you may worship God without any of it. A man may sing God’s praises without ever opening his mouth. A man may pray unto God and yet never say a word, for it is soul-singing and soul-praying that God accepts. And when God speaks back again to the soul that has learned to talk with Him, He does not speak lip-language, tongue-language, or ear-language, but *soul-language*.

I have already said that this soul-language sometimes takes the body of preaching, or of the Word of God, and so becomes, as it were, a thing to appeal to the ear, but even then the letter kills—it is only the Spirit that makes alive. It is God’s soul talking to man’s soul that is wanted here. And mark you, dear friend, if ever God speaks to your soul, you will not have to ask who it is that speaks, for if ever the eternal God comes into direct contact with the human heart, there is no making a mistake.

Do you understand this? Some of you think I am fanatical. I would to God you were all as fanatical! May you have God talking with your soul and may the Holy Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are born of God! Pray the prayer and may God hear it now, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”

Then I want you to also notice that *the prayer here offered is a present one*. It means, “Say *now* unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” It is not, “Do it by and by,” but “now, Lord, now.” Perhaps some of you have heard God’s voice in years gone by, but now you have got into Doubting Castle. Well, you may pray this prayer here, while you are sitting in the pew, though none shall hear it but yourself, yet God’s Spirit shall talk to you, and you shall hear Him say, “I am thy salvation,” and then your heart shall sing, “I am my Beloved’s and my Beloved is mine.”

Pray the prayer now and it need not take a moment to be answered, for, while you are yet speaking it, you shall feel it. You will be bowed down under a sense of gratitude and yet you will be lifted up with a “joy unspeakable, and full of glory,” when you can sing—

*“While Jesus whispers I am His,
And my Beloved’s mine.”*

Come, believers, let us all pray this prayer, whether we have heard this voice before or not. O, my God, make us true believers now, and may we all pray it, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” The preacher often needs to use this prayer himself, and he has no doubt that many of his brethren have been constrained to use just such a cry.

Well, let it go up again tonight, “O God, give us back the love of our espousals, our first faith, our early joy, and speak You, with Your own voice, to our troubled hearts, and say to our souls, ‘I am thy salvation.’”

II. And now shall we turn, very briefly indeed to the second point? It was to be THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE ASSURANCE ASKED FOR.

I do not think I shall preach on that at all, but leave you to find it out for yourselves. You who know it know that I cannot describe it, for you cannot describe it yourselves. And you who do not know it would not understand it if I told you what it is. You will understand as much as this—that if you were able to feel tonight that God Himself had said to your soul, “I am thy salvation,” you would feel infinitely more happy than you now do.

Some of you are very cheerful, but sometimes you do get troubled and cast down. You apparently have, I know, a great deal of hilarity and mirth about you, but at night, or in the early morning, or when you have to go to a funeral, you do not feel quite as you would like to feel. There is an aching void somewhere or other, and you have not found out that which is to fill it yet.

Now, if God Himself should say to you, “I am thy salvation,” would not that fill it? Oh, what a different life you would then lead! How happy you would be, and being saved, how holy you would try to be. And being holy, how near to God you would try to live!

“If I were but saved,” says one, “then would I indeed praise the Lord as long as I had any being.” Well, poor soul, I pray that this may be your case—but the blessedness of it you must taste to know. “O taste and see that the LORD is good!” There is no other way of understanding it than this.

I think I told you, once, the little story of the boy at the mission station who had received a piece of sugar from a missionary, and when he went home he told his father that he had had something so sweet. The father asked if it were as sweet as such and such a fruit? Oh, sweeter than that! Was it as sweet as such another? Yes, much sweeter than that, and when the boy could not make his father understand how sweet it was, he ran down to the station and said, “Oh, sir, would you give me another piece of that sweet stuff? Father wants to understand how sweet it is and I want to make him understand it, but I can’t tell him.” So he got another piece of sugar and back he went to his father with it. “Here, Father, now you will understand how sweet it is.” A very good illustration is this of the text I just quoted, “O taste and see that the LORD is good!” Taste for yourselves—and then you shall know for yourselves.

III. Now let us go to the third point without delay. HOW ARE WE TO GET THIS ASSURANCE? HOW SHALL THE BELIEVER KNOW THAT HE IS SAVED?

The way to assurance is *through the door of simple faith*. The Gospel is, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” To believe is to trust Christ. Now, if I know that I trust Christ and that I have, in obedience to His command, been baptized, then God says I shall be saved and is not that enough for me? Ought it not to be, at any rate?

If God says it, it must be true. I believe His Book to be inspired and He has put it thus, “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” Well, if I do believe on Him, then I am not condemned. Conscience says, “You are a long way off being perfect.” I know that. Ah, conscience! I know it to my shame and to my sorrow, but the Word says, “He that believeth on him is not condemned.” I do believe on Him and I am not condemned, let conscience say what it likes.

“Well, but” the devil says, “how can this be true?” That is neither my business nor yours, Satan. God says it is so and therefore it is so. That is enough for me. We take men’s word, why should we not take God’s Word? He who simply believes in Jesus Christ must have some degree of assurance, for the simple act of reclining, recumbently resting, upon Christ, if it be done truly and sincerely, is in its measure assuring to the heart.

At any rate, it is the milk that brings the cream. Faith is the milk and assurance is the cream. You must get your assurance from your faith—and if it be a simple faith which relies entirely upon Jesus Christ, it will, if not directly, yet very speedily, bring you some degree of assurance of your interest in Christ.

There are many good people who say, “We are trusting in Christ, and we hope we are Christians.” They do not like to say that they know they are saved. They think they are very humble in saying, “We trust so. We hope so.” Whereas there is nothing but pride, like a thick sediment, at the bottom of all that kind of talk. What right have I, when God tells me that a thing is so, to say that I hope it is so?

If I were to promise to give a subscription of ten pounds to any object, and the person to whom I promised it should say, “Well, I hope you will give it,” I should answer, “But I have said that I will.” “Yes, I hope you will.” “But don’t you believe me?” “Yes, I hope I do, but...” Why, if such talk as this prevailed among men of the world, they would be for showing the door to one another. It would be looked upon as an insult not to believe a man—and why should you treat God in a manner in which you would not like to be treated by your fellow men?

God says that I am saved if I trust Christ. I do trust Christ and I am saved—if I am not, then God's Word is not true. It comes to that. Since his Word must be true—then, if I really trust Christ and I know that I do—if, whatever else I have left undone, my soul *does* cling to Him, sink or swim, not having the shadow of a hope anywhere but in His precious blood—and if I can say this, then I know I am saved, for God says I am. Experience and conscience may say whatever they like, but “let God be true, and every man a liar.”

The way, however, to increase the measure of our assurance is to be found *in more study of the Word of God*. Some people have not the confidence they might have because they do not understand the truth. I do think that certain forms of Arminianism are deleterious to the faith of the Christian—those forms, for instance, which deny the election of God, the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit, and the final perseverance, because the sure preservation, of the saints. These denials seem to me to cut from under a man's foot everything he has to stand upon, and I do not wonder that the man who believes them has no assurance.

If I believe that God's children may fall away and perish, it seems to me that full assurance, at any rate, becomes an impossibility, for if they may fall, why may not I? What is there in me that I should stand where others fall? But when I rest alone upon the finished work and righteousness of Jesus, and believe it is finished, then I can sing, “Now unto him who is able to keep me from falling, and to present me faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen.”

Study the Word much, dear Christian brother. Never mind the magazines. Never mind the newspapers. Further than they are necessary to your business, you need not trouble yourself with them. We would all of us be a great deal better if we kept to the one Book. Let us be as expansive in our knowledge as possible, but let us keep the Bible as the sun and center of the solar system of our knowledge—and let everything we know revolve around that center. If we knew more of God, we might be content to know less of men.

Next to this, I think if we would have full assurance established, *we must be more in prayer than we are*. You will not be in a healthy state if you live without prayer. You cannot live without it if you are a Christian—but I mean you cannot be healthy if you live without *much* prayer. I am persuaded that none of us pray as we ought.

I am not given to bandying accusations against God's saints without thought, but I am afraid that this is not a praying age. It is a reading age, a preaching age, a working age, but it is not a praying age. When one reads of the Puritans prayers, one is astounded. Why, their public prayers were sometime three-quarters of an hour in length and sometimes one hour and a half by the clock. I do not like *that*. But their private prayers were longer far and days of fasting and of prayer were quite common things.

I wish we could have a day of fasting and of prayer about this cattle disease, but I only say this by the way. I wish we all of us prayed a great deal more than we do. We just pray for a short season because we say that we are so busy, but we forget that the more we pray, the more able we are to work. The mower grudges not the time he spends in whetting his scythe, or the scribe the interval for mending his pen.

Martin Luther, when he had twice as much to do as he usually had, said, “I must pray for three hours today at least, or else I shall never get through my work.” The more work he had, the more did he pray in order that he might be able to get through it. Oh, that we did the like! We would have more assurance if we were more on the mount with God alone.

Let me also advise you *to attend an edifying ministry and to get with well-advanced Christians*. Some of the young plants here, when they get moved away, suffer terribly from the cold. They come, perhaps, from the country full of doubts and fears, and then some of my good brethren and sisters get round them, and talk to them, and cheer them up, and then they are so glad. Oh, that all churches were warm-hearted, cordial and affectionate!

There is so much stuck-upishness, so much keeping aloof from one another, that there can be no talking one to another about the things of God. By the grace of God, we will try to break this down and get a little warm-heartedness to one another—and so we will hope to get the full assurance by talking to one another of the things of the kingdom and so strengthening each other in our work.

But dear friends, if you want to get full assurance, I can recommend to you another thing and it is this, *work for Christ*. We are not saved by works, but working for God brings us many blessings. Rest assured that, if you spend and are spent for Christ, you shall never be out of spending money. If you lay out your strength for Him, He will lay in for you fresh stores of strength. He does not give us faith that we may bury it as the man buried his talent, but if we have five talents of faith, and use them, He will give us five talents more—and so we shall have assurance if we use our faith well.

And then, again, *praise God for what you have*. Old Master Brookes says, “If you only have candlelight, bless God for it and He will give you starlight. When you have got starlight, praise God for it and He will give you moonlight. When you have got moonlight, rejoice in it and He will give you sunlight. And when you have got sunlight, praise Him still more and He will make the light of your sun as the light of seven days, for the Lord Himself shall be the light of your spirit.” Praise and bless Him and your assurance shall grow.

Above all, *press through ordinances, and means, and prayers, to the person of Christ Himself*. Thomas found that putting his finger into Christ’s wounds was a cure-all for his unbelief. And so will you. Ask Him to—

*“Wrap you in His crimson vest,
And tell you all His name.”*

Pray Him to reveal Himself to you in His sufferings and in His glory. Ask Him that you may read His heart, that He may speak to you and show you the great love unspeakable wherewith He loved you from before the foundation of the world. Then your communion with Christ shall be as eagle wings to bear you up to heaven. Your fellowship with Jesus shall be like horses of fire to drag your chariot of flaming love up to the throne of the Most High.

You shall walk the mountain-top, talking with God, for you will have learned to commune with Christ. Your spirit shall make its nest hard by the throne of the Most High. You shall get above the cares of earth, you shall mount beyond the storm and strife of worldly conflict, and you shall even now bathe your souls in the unbroken sea of everlasting calm before the throne of God.

Let us ask Him to say to each of our souls tonight, “I am thy salvation.” Some of us are going to the communion table. Perhaps He will say it to us there. And if He does not, we will go home to pray. And if He does not speak to us then, perhaps in the night-watches He will say it. And when we awake, we will still plead on, until those lips which said, “Let there be light,” and there was light, shall again say, “Let there be light,” to us, and we shall know that He is our salvation.

May God bless you very richly by hearing this prayer, for Jesus’ sake.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

PHILIPPIANS 1:21-30 AND 2:1-11

Philippians 1:21. *For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.* [See sermon #146, The Good Man’s Life and Death]

“To me to live is Christ.” If he lived, he lived to know more of Christ, studying His person, and learning by his happy experience so that he increased in his knowledge of his Lord and Savior. If he lived, he lived to imitate Christ more closely, becoming more and more conformed to His image. If he lived, he lived to make Christ more and more known to others and to enjoy Christ more himself. In these

four senses, Paul might well say, “For to me to live is Christ”—to know Christ more, to imitate Christ more, to preach Christ more, and to enjoy Christ more.

“And to die is gain,” because death, he felt, would free him from all sin and from all doubts as to his state in the present and the future. It would be gain to him, for then he would no longer be tossed upon the stormy sea, but he would be safe upon the land whither he was bound. It would be gain to him, for then he would be free from all temptations both from within and from without.

It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all his enemies—there would be no cruel Nero, no blaspheming Jews, no false brethren then. It would be gain to him, for then he would be delivered from all suffering—there would be no more shipwrecks, no more being beaten with rods, or being stoned.

Dying, too, would be gain for him, for he would then be free from all fear of death, and having once died, he would die no more forever. It would be gain to him, for he would find in heaven better and more perfect friends than he would leave behind on earth. And he would find, above all, his Savior and be a partaker of His glory. This is a wide subject and the more we think over it, the more sweetness shall we get out of it.

22. *But if I live in the flesh,*

That is a very different thing from living to the flesh.

22. *This is the fruit of my labour;*

He lived to work for Christ and to see souls saved as the fruit of his labor.

22-23. *But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour : yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:* [See sermons #274, Paul’s Desire to Depart and #1136, “Forever with the Lord”]

There were the two currents flowing in opposite directions. The apostle seemed to hear two voices speaking to him. One of them said, “Live, and you will gather the fruit of your labor, you will see sinners saved, churches established, and the kingdom of Christ extended in the earth.” The other said, “Die, and you will be with Christ.” So he knew not which to choose.

24-26. *Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; that your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.*

The apostle desired to die, yet he was willing to live. Death would have been gain to him, yet he would endure the loss of living if he might thereby benefit others. Let us also always prefer the welfare of others before our own—and care rather to serve others than to make ourselves never so happy.

Now the apostle gives these saints at Philippi a loving exhortation.

27. *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*

The unity of the church is of the utmost importance. When there is a want of brotherly love, the perfect bond is lost—and as a bundle of rods, when once the binding cord is cut, becomes merely a number of weak and single twigs, so is it with a divided church. May we always be kept in one holy bond of perfect union with each other!

28. *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition,*

“Away with them! Away with them!” cried the heathen. “Those who are not ashamed to acknowledge the crucified Christ are only worthy of perdition.” But of what was their courage a token to themselves?

28. *But to you of salvation, and that of God.*

For when saints can bear fierce persecution without flinching it is an evident sign that they are saved by the grace of God.

29. *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him,*

Which is a great gift,

29. *But also to suffer for his sake;*

Which is a still greater gift.

30. *Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.*

“The same agony” it is in the Greek, as if every Christian must, in his measure, go through the same agony through which the apostle went, striving and wrestling against sin, groaning under its burden, agonizing to be delivered from it, and laboring to bring others out of its power.

Philippians 2:1-2. *If If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

He knew that these saints at Philippi loved him. They had sent once and again to relieve his necessities, so he pleaded with them, by their love to him, to love each other. He does as much say, “If you really do love me, if it is not a sham, if you have any sympathy with me, and with my labors and sufferings, if you really have the same spirit that burns in my breast, make my heart full of joy by clinging to one another, by being like-minded, ‘having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.’”

3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory;*

This would be a good motto for those who are intending to build new places of worship. Let them not be built through strife, because of a squabble among the people of God, but make sure that all concerned are actuated by right motives and seeking only the glory of God. Then sometimes, if one gives a guinea, another feels that he must give two so as to excel him—this is giving out of vainglory. Let nothing be done in this way, but as unto the Lord, and as in His sight, let us do all our works and give all our gifts.

3-4. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

Consider how you can help others and in what way you can prosper them both in temporal things and in spiritual. You are members of a body, so one member is not to think for itself alone—the unity of the whole body requires that every separate and distinct part of it should be in harmony with the whole.

5-8. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* [See sermon #2281, Our Lord in the Valley of Humiliation]

He humbled Himself, so be you not unwilling to humble yourself. Lower than the cross Christ could not go, His death was one of such extreme ignominy that He could not have been more disgraced and degraded. Be you willing to take the lowest place in the church of God and to render the most humble service. Count it an honor to be allowed to wash the saints’ feet. Be humble in mind—nothing is lost by cherishing this spirit, for see how Jesus Christ was honored in the end.

9-11. *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father..* [See Sermon #101, The Exaltation of Christ]

Some foolish and superstitious persons make this passage a pretext for bowing their heads at the name of Jesus whenever it is mentioned. Nothing can be more senseless, because the passage means no such thing.

What we are taught here is the great truth that Jesus Christ, though once He stooped to the lowest shame, is now exalted to the very highest glory, and even the devils in hell are compelled to own the might of His power. We are also to learn from this passage that the way to ascend is to descend. He who

would be chief must be willing to be the servant of all. The King of kings was the Servant of servants—and if you would be crowned with honor by and by, you must be willing to be despised and rejected of men now. The Lord give us this gracious humbleness of mind, for Jesus Christ's sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.